

DUST OF STARS

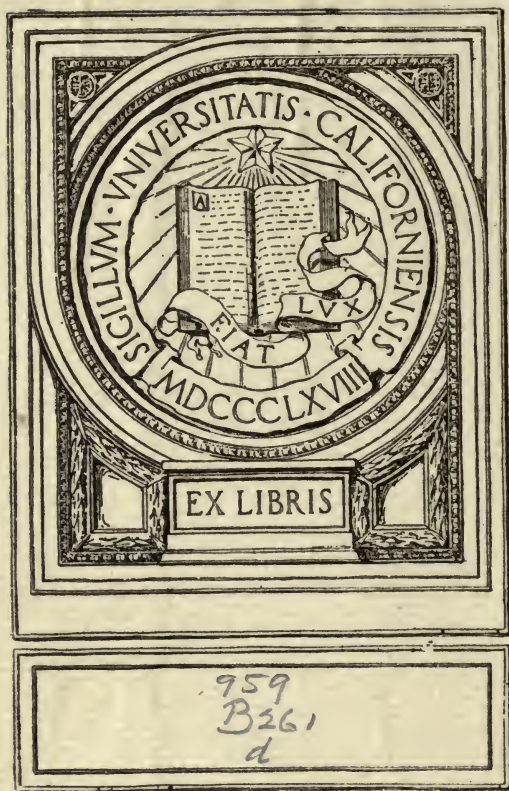
DANFORD BARNEY

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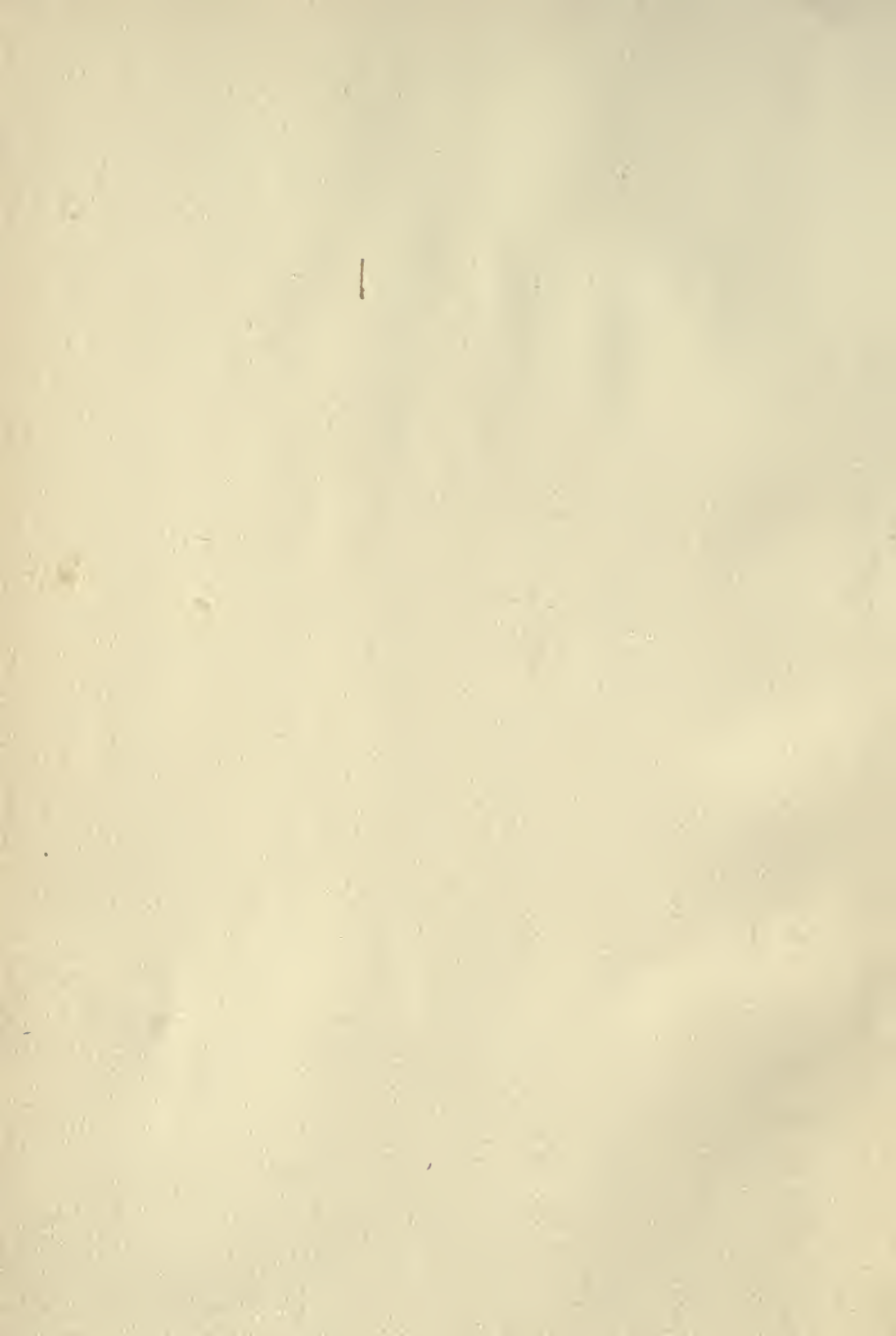


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DUST OF STARS



DUST OF STARS

BY DANFORD BARNEY

*"There is no god, but we, who breathe the air,
Are god ourselves, and touch god everywhere!"*

NEW YORK: JOHN LANE COMPANY

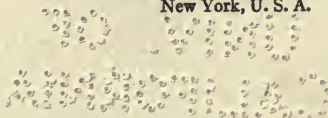
LONDON: JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD

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TO I. M. F.

The author wishes to acknowledge permission to reprint certain of these poems that have appeared in the "Yale Literary Magazine," and the "International."

PREFACE

*If music be only madness,
Bred of a fool's dark brain:
If ye have felt no sadness
In drops of the Autumn's rain:
If ye believe no wonder
Sleeps in the crimson skies:
Then, let us tear asunder
The flesh of our mortal eyes!*

*Yet we must feel, alone,
The sky, and the sea, and the hills,
Whose parched lips seek the chalice
Of mystery in our wills!
We, who have never waited
To glorify only the end,
May gather the earth's eternal
To live and to transcend!*

*Are we but hucksters of pity,
Crying with death in our eyes?
We who are deaf to evil,
And boast that we criticise?
So, we have made fulfilment,
"To have been good, and died!"
To be good is facile, and only
The martyrs are crucified!*

*Some, that have stood in wonder,
Shattered the dead soul's bars,
Have heard the tongueless choir
Beyond the sleep of the stars.
They, that are humble in beauty,
Sustained of immortal wine,
Let them be strong in common,
One with the superfine!*

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DUST OF STARS



L. J. B.

There sprang a lily in eternal light,
Giving its sweetness all about:
Like to a flame, in a rift of night,
It flickered out.

So came she to us, as a flower,
Fresh as a bud in April's rain,
Only to play in her brief hour,
And fade again.

Did she but smile, it flitted on
The lips of others, for they knew
Her heart was clear, and, like the sun,
Warm, and as true.

And the Johnny-jump-ups smiled
Where, by the garden path, they grew,
Watching to see her, but the child
To Eden flew.

Ah, in the days of long ago,
Though life itself had been the cost,
I might have given all to know
All that I lost.

One day all the world was still
And dark—and I alone.
No one had spoken of God's will,
That she had gone.

* * *

Hark to the summer breeze that blows.
It lingers, whispers in the grass
As if—I lay awake, perhaps
To hear her pass.

A WOMAN ABOVE NAPLES

Twilight stole upon us as she spoke
Soft, happy words—calling up the day
On which, above the splendour, she awoke,
Of tinted dusk, across th' empurpled bay.
Beyond her words, distinct I heard the sea,
Crooning its southern lullaby; the breeze
Came into being, sweeping up to me,
Whispered and vanished, drifting to emerald seas,
I saw the dream-clad vista, as she spoke,
The waning glory from the lofty site,
And, with her spirit memory, awoke
Before the floodgates of the infinite.
"Now and again, the heart beats, little lad,
"Against the portals of our errant past.
"Softly, we step, half-happy, halfway sad,
"Within the doors. Our senses shut them fast
"Upon the present, till we glean awhile
"The pleasures of far ancient journeyings,
"Made beautiful in Youth—or wanly smile
"To hear the ghost-songs that the memory sings.
"Ah, can you know, dear lad, that as we go
"Beneath the shadow years, how happily
"We feed the still warm heart, if but to know
"That glories of our past could really be.
"So was it that I woke one afternoon,
"Dearly refreshed, upon the lone grey hill,
"As the heart-beat seemed happily in tune
"With the earth's fugue—all silently and still,
"Down and away, the vineyard hillside swept
"To the dim line of Naples' housetops where

“Above the shadow streets the grey wreaths slept,
“Of smoke that drifted idly on the air,
“Little wreaths, so weakly to compare
“With the far billowed mass of glooming cloud
“Above Vesuvius. Again the flare
“Of lava fire threading the rifted shroud,
“And all so far that Vulcan’s tempest failed
“To touch the silence. Yet without a sound
“All life seemed vibrant. One lone vessel sailed
“Away to sea, between the twin isles bound
“Out to eternity. Whence, to my wondering eyes,
“A greater beauty, treasured from the store
“Of God’s great masterpieces, set the skies
“With myriad colours—to the blue-lined shore
“A pathway led of shimmering lambent gold,
“Leading beneath the rainbow arch at rest
“Upon the darkling isles—as legends told
“That rainbows end in islands of the blest.
“The shifting clouds drew quietly apart
“One brief, calm instant, wonderfully bright,
“To hold bewitched all nature’s thirsting heart,
“To drench the soul in opalescent light.
“Speechless! I watch, until the red sun dies
“Beyond the water. Lights around the bay
“Open a peep, like tiny elfin eyes,
“Stealing forth as twilight cloaks the day!
“Or—mayhap, fallen stars from out the skies,
“Still burning, as their beams reach up to me!
“Again, they are processioned fireflies,
“Marching beside a listless, weaving sea!”
The story ends. The fire flickers low,
As shadows startle, restless on the wall,

Behind the dark bench. Even the pictures grow
Dreamful in distance. Every object falls
Away to nothingness. And, heart to heart,
We sit together on the vine-clad height,
As southern vespers chant our counterpart,
Breaking the flood-gates of the Infinite!

THE FIRST CHANTEY

Straight as a lily wand she stood, or a rose stalk, bowed to
the breath of morning.

Light in her eyes gleamed strange, or fled to the shadow of
God's far sacred vale.

Oh, for the youth, transfixed in glory, to drive the clouds
from the face of dawning!

You, Francesca, came in your spirit, stronger than arms of
a North-sea gale.

Down by the harbour-road we met, where the light of the
grey sea broke the gloaming.

Down from the wind-swept hills of faith, out of the mist
you came to me,

Simply and true, as a child of Holland, beauty that sets the
heart to roaming

Over the haunted fields of wonder, asking if this be fantasy.

The fragrance of your song was soft, broken now in the sud-
den laughter,

Sweeter than light that breaks in glory, a silver rift in the
clouds of night.

Still, as your words might cease, the air was tense in the
silence, coming after,

Just as the soul drifts blind in bondage, terrified in its sheer
delight.

Disarming all hypocrisy, unashamed in the sweet disorder
Of your dress, and the shadows of gold and darkening hair
adrift to the breeze,

Wanton you came in the eyes of youth, that dauntless runs
to the farthest border
Of hope that, in its truth, transcends our commonplace reali-
ties.

Ah, Francesca, as you came did you dream of the gold
dawn's breaking
Over the sea of stranger faces that fleck the past as with
half-wan stars?
Yours has been the faith of ages, hunted through pain of
the world's dark making.
You have flung wide the silent casement, broken the wisps
of its shadow-bars!

How the mind drifts back upon your words that faded in
chaos, surging
Against the shadowed rocks as the spin-drift surf swept wild
on the naked dune:
Your song has softly drawn the chords of wonder taut with
rhythm, merging
Silently in dreams that keep the majesty of the world in
tune.

Out of the hireling millions, standing alone in your song
of heaven's daring,
You have reached to the uttermost bounds of light to garner
our richest needs.
Yours is to pity the dying souls who plod across their pin-
folds, staring
Into the mystery of night, dreaming they, too, may live their
creeds.

Your heart dissects the baser lures that puppets crave in the
moment's fleetness.

What if the stern-faced prophets doubt in their narrowed
hearts? Why must we care,

If we have met in the kingdom of winds, suffered and found
life's dearer sweetness,

Bred in the courage of unmasked wonder to sacrifice unto
men, and dare?

If we have fled to the hill's far rim, breathing the warmth of
a new sun's rising,

Have we to turn again to the valley of shadow where jesters
fawned and cried?

Yours is the faith of coming dawn, setting to shame the
world's despising.

Watch their quavering lips. 'Tis yours to know, as they
know in their hearts, they lied!

SONG IN THE MEADOW

Francesca, dost thou watch me now,
Here in the meadow? Long ago
It was I had thee in my arms.
Dost thou remember all we dreamed
Of love and wonder, how life seemed
A treasury of all thy charms,
Francesca, long ago?

And, oh, the halo in thy hair!
The sweet curve of thy shoulder bare
I would have kissed in Paradise!
Only to dream upon thy breast,
As floating among clouds, at rest,
Mad with the heaven in thine eyes,
Francesca—long ago!

Dost thou watch me as I lie,
Thinking me dead, beneath the sky,
Cool in the meadow grass by night?
Prone, with my hands beneath my head,
The villagers have thought me dead,
Because I slept in fields by night.

I saw a golden ship arise
Against the crimson of the skies,
Beyond the outer gilded strand.
And, oh, the light upon the oars
Flashed, in its glory, to the shores
Of Twilight, in far sunset land.

So the ship vanished on the sea,
Bearing thy soul afar from me,
 Francesca, and I knew not where.
Yet sweet the wind sang in the spars
A song re-echoed to the stars
 That glitter through the twilight air.

Ah, love, dost wonder that I lie,
With face unto the arching sky,
 Since thy soul broke its fretted bars?
Ah, wondering, how might I tell
The mystery of worlds? 'Tis well
 I dreamed thou wert among the stars,
 Francesca—long ago!

THE FALL PIPER

Along the way wild children fled.
Against their radiant faces blew
The shattered leaves, dust-stained and sere,
Like empty dreams, untrue or dead,
Bright, wind-blown ghosts that elfins strew
Along the path of the failing year.
Lips parted in their cry of cheer
As, over the distance borne, was heard
Sweet carols of the mountain bird.

Their wind-swept eyes, alight with tears,
(Jewels of witches, legends say.)
Over the fields they ran and spied,
Where 'neath the slope a gnarled oak rears
Grey limbs, an elf all robed in grey,
Under the shadowed mountain side.
On each fair day of Indian-tide,
All gathered there to hear him sing
Strange lyrics of forgotten Spring.

White fingers touch the trembling lips.
In vagrancy, his smiling eyes
Are kindled with mesmeric light.
So, into dusk the memory slips.
(Gay, plum'd birds chant vagaries
Of fancied fields and valleys bright.)
Thus children dream in dear delight,
Until their meadow sleeps in flowers,
And stand bewitched the creeping hours.

And spellbound, in the fairy ring,
Children of the byways listen
To bird-like song, each trill and note,
Clasping the whitened hands that cling
About their knees. His wild eyes glisten
Above the sun-brown of the throat,
The quivering lips. In magic, float
His wonder-songs, to banish care
Upon the haunted, autumn air!

“LOVE AND LIBERATION”

Thou askt in wonder
Why that I sing,
If but to tell
A sad, sweet thing.

Thou hast the world,
And love, and men,
I but a song
And death: what then?

Aye, there is gold,
But may gold buy
Friendship or honour,
Reality?

I followed thee
Out and away,
Brushing the clouds
From the face of day,

Through cacophonies
And tears,
Hoping in thee
For after years.

But thou hast failed
To understand.
And I, a stranger,
Dropped the hand

That led to God,
Following thee.
Must I not sing
Eternally?

Thou standest mute,
Thy heart in night.
To heal the soul
In a rift of light.

Friendless, alone,
Thou bidst me smile,
Denying me all,
Knowing the while

How thou mightst break
The bonds that tie,
And cast the weight
From ecstasy.

Others gave me
My birth, my place,
To have a heart,
Crises to face.

Surely our God
Did not decree
That I should sing
Apart from thee.

Because I tread,
With feet unbound

By fetters, on
The sacred ground

Of my dear idol,
E'en of thee,
Partisan in
My symphony,

I may not smile
That I am here,
Merely to know
That thou art near.

I built me castles
In the air.
But they have crumbled,
Falling there,

When in their glory
Thou wouldst laugh,
Sweeping them far
As wind the chaff.

There is a bird
In a gilded cage,
A travesty
On his small stage.

Does he not sing?
But, to translate,
His notes tell not
Of love, but hate:

He has our all,
All that men give,
Only to sing
In pain, and live.

Is there not sorrow
Beyond retrieve,
In giving all,
Nought to receive!

Ah, there is beauty
In the fire
Of his sweet song,
The deep desire

To be away,
Up heavenward,
Over the lovers
On the sward.

So would I seek
From earthly gold,
Splendour beyond,
Fortunes untold.

I would away
At liberty
Into the dusk—
Aye, e'en with thee.

HOLLY-BLOOM

Holly-Bloom of the winter's coming:
Hope in the grey earth's wind-lament:
Blood of youth against time's running:
Moons have waned, and the year is spent.

Old embers of a dream
Upon new hopes that witchery denies
To consummate in truth! Songs of the dead
Revery in which we lived alone,
Too sacred for the ears of aught but thee!
Of thy sweet lips, the treasured words that fled
As vespers down the wind, half-silent, gone!
A crock of opal broken on the sea,
Where drift the shattered fires of the skies,
And heaven's discovered gleam!

Ah, joy that, coming after
The stricken silence, wakens the dawn of years
From that dark hour, when red petals slept
Upon the roses of our Arcady!
Since then, thine eyes have followed in the dark;
Thy feet ran down the torrent gale, or crept
Beside me in a shadowed fantasy;
And now we meet. What though the hills be stark
With their lost vesture, all thy wind-blown tears
Are tremulous in laughter!

Holly-Bloom of the winter's coming:
Hope in the grey earth's wind-lament:
Blood of youth against time's running:
Moons shall rise, though a year be spent!

SHADOWS

I knew the utter gladness of that hour,
When you came forth incarnate and a dream
Of some unfolded flower,
Newly awakened in its sentient gleam
Of too sweet inspiration. Memory yet
Keeps the old wound awake in silent pain.
The shadow of your beauty lingers there,
Haunting the lilacs, scented with regret,
And the warm fragrance of your fallen hair,
Hallowed in the sweetness of new rain.

I caught you out of the earth's commonplace,
Beneath the whispering pine and starling's song.
Your dearly vivid face,
Outlined in broken sunlight, spoke the wrong
Our hearts commit against the dream of years.
How might one pray for you to understand
The fearful beauty of our silent prayer!
Ah, had I kissed and hurt you in your tears,
When the heart's strings were tense, yet unaware
That God might ever have withheld his hand!

The flame of day had seared and left undone
The grey defences of our sacred love
To thoughts that one by one
Crept to the threshold of the heart, and strove
Dumb in supplication. Why confess
Our lost, dead prayer, begot of Paradise!
You were the world's one flower to unfold
The perfect sense of utter holiness,

Beyond the gift of our weak lips to mould
The tremulous dream of hope behind your eyes.

Now must we hang suspended in a breath,
Forbidden to give our beauty's ultimate
In any form but death
That is the image of God's consummate.
Still, in the twilight of our happiness,
Kind darkness cools the memories unkind.
Beyond the old pine hangs the summer moon,
Withdrawn in fear from this dark loneliness,
Sailing adrift as some red toy balloon,
Forgetful of the child it left behind.

Only the dim whirr of the bat's dark sweep
Crosses the lilt of stars above
The brook, where willows weep,
Hidden in slumber of unspoken love.
The wind still sighs among warm trees to-night,
Slowing the pulse from the blind soul's duress.
Some haunting glamour of your face, alone,
Startles the poignant sense of old delight.
The starling, waking life's soft undertone,
Resolves the pain of earth's unconsciousness.

FROM A TRAIN

The reek of smoke ; cacophony of cars,
And the blind chaos which the heart confounds.
Beings seem cloudy things ; fumes of cigars
Fall numbing on the sense. The riot sounds,
In their own being, sweep the mind away
To fields beyond, in flowers glorified.
Frail outlines of old trees, gnarled and grey,
Just past as ghosts, fading and terrified.
Far out beyond the darkling earth, the sky
Is gone from sight. A crimson bit of cloud
Touched it with colour, but all light must die.
Only the night, the rain, and the black shroud !
Not that the day is done, that we should care,
Only—beyond the darkness, far behind
The path we fled across, that you are there.
Rain on the purple panes, like tears that blind
A heart bereft of happinesses past !
And it is always hard to build a dream,
Misunderstood, perhaps, and not to last ;
Perhaps to fade. Ah, may you watch the gleam
Across the centuries of crowded hours !
The bitterness is not the smile that dies,
But to have built a shrine of silent hours,
To know that faith is lost in fantasies !

SONG O' GLOUCESTER

The ships come in all laden, lass,
To Gloucester by the sea;
From all the marts, great ships that pass,
By night, upon the sea.

The cargoes of an hundred shores
Come swift across the sea;
Strange ships that bear a thousand stores
To Gloucester by the sea.

Treasures of the orient
Are borne upon the sea;
Grey ships of fortune, old prows bent
Toward Gloucester by the sea.

Yet, would ye sell for treasure
The wind-songs of the sea?
Can ye seek to measure
Dreams of eternity?

Would ye sell a friendship
For cargoes out of Ind?
Can ye buy with trinkets
The whisper of the wind?
Would ye take a fortune—for
The whisper of the wind?

Ne'er forget the dawn-songs,
The great house on the Hill,
The home of gloried brotherhood,
The winds that whisper still!

Can ye gain, for bargaining,
The nodding plenilune?
Would ye give your brotherhood
For a truxster's boon?

A spirit sings upon the Hill,
Of hospitality.
Would ye sell a friendship, found
In Gloucester by the sea!

THE DREAM WOMAN

She is singing,
Wine of bitter-sweet is bringing
In its chalice ever-dwelling
Of her heart.
Bits o' dream-stuff she is selling,
Web and woof in colours changing,
Through the lights and shadows ranging,
Of life's mart.

Dreamland fashion,
Ah, her words touch deeper passion
Than the lilt of mere dream-chords,
Through love's fire.
Telling all that life affords,
Comes the voice in still refrain,
Hiding in laughter, and e'en the pain
Of sweet desire.

FORSAKING

I set me forth on the broad highway
That dips to the westering sun,
Down the grey road of the mist, and away
To a shore where the great tides run.

"O, sweet, till ye come back," she sang,
"Till ye return, how long?"
"Beloved, I come no more," I sang
My last love, even-song.

I saw her form on the rim o' the earth,
Black 'gainst the eastern sky.
I wept a bit o'er the days o' mirth,
Dreaming of days gone by.

Watching the silver fringe of the sea,
That ran on the golden sand,
I wandered the shores of Brittany,
Far from her hallowed land.

When, out on the rim o' the earth, I caught
Sight of a sail, a ship on the sea.
Soft and still, as in pity wrought,
Drifted a song of love to me.

"Ah, sweet, till ye return," it cried,
"Till ye come back, how long?"
Come but to smile on the crucified,
Soul of my even-song!"

THE PROPHET

Within the wilderness of winds he dreamed
Even as prophets, long and long ago.
The cry of multitudes smote on his soul
With dissonance—so from their pain he caught
The glory of defiance. This he wrought
Into his vision, wondered that it seemed
Even as life, because it was not so,
But years had marred the image of their goal.

The broken hopes of ages gathered he.
Out of the dawn he built his firmament
With stars of diamond, weaving the light thread
Of tinted clouds into the picture rare.
Songs of romance filled the trembling air,
Perfumed with flowers of olden Arcady.
The blood of saints he took for sacrament,
Spirits of glory old, long aeons fled.

Then far upon the wander-winds he hurled
His new-born creed, woven in revery
Of sacred hours, spun of paradise;
Till jesters came who mocked the tale he told,
Unknowing that he wrought his work in gold.
These taught, by rule, the puppets of the world,
Breaking the souls of men with witchery
Of strange mirage, blinding the dreamer's eyes.

And now amid our prayers, the after-song
Of mummers who in worship follow after,
Casting their tears in byways where he trod!

Our sword of truth was rust 'ere it drew blood
Of its own purpose. Dreams misunderstood
Break stronger hearts than those of men who throng,
Wild, sorrow-mad, to mourn the death of laughter
That died with him, playfellow of his God.

REVENIR

I had a friend,
Ay, such a friend as might
Have bridged the trivialities of life
With bonds of manhood, valour, truth, and love.
He set my humble friendship all above,
With promise of a path with pleasures rife,
To keep me near
His heart. Ah, that was long ago,
I deaf, and did not hear,
And so
He vanished in the night.

I had a friend.
Long after, many a day
It was when he returned, work-worn, and tired,
From furrowed fields where strange-eyed passers-by,
Princes and paupers, faces to the sky,
Lived in their rutted world. I had admired
The knights sincere
In olden story books, but long ago.
Turning aside, I did not hear,
And so
He, too, turned on his way.

"I had a friend,
"Ay, such a friend," I cried.
Oh, could he know the meaning in my grief,
Forgetting all that he had told and done,
Because I was alone, and years had run
Their course? Ay, understanding is belief.

All that he said
Seemed sweet, and pained, and even long ago.
For all his pain, alone I paid,
And lo!
His lips touched mine and sighed.

PRAYER

I am alone, afraid, and weak to cry.

Oh, to seek and build a great ideal!
Only to have for whom to live and die,
Love that is real!

I seek a soul, O God, and all as mine.

A fragile vessel from thy altar send
To set within the depths of my heart-shrine,
There to defend.

This is a wonder-temple, wrought by thee,

Yet must it fall. I would not have it other.
But in thy name may I, as thou for me,
Die for another.

REVERY OF WIND

Soft-footed as a stranger brushing past
Stole up the wind. Its singing in the spars
Seemed opiate as I watched the swaying mast,
Swinging dark arms across the marching stars.

As if by magic of an unseen hand,
It steeped the mortal sense in harmony.
Breaking the portals of the mind, it fanned
Deep thoughts to dreams with its dulled symphony.

Sweeping, star-ridden, from the trackless skies,
It raised the wave crests till each caught the light
Of the full-rounded moon, like myriad eyes
That glitter round a phantom ship at night.

Oh, out beyond, out where the moonpath lay,
Far through the dreamland mist I fancied thee,
With still, sweet lips that would, yet could not say
Why thou didst walk alone upon the sea.

IRONY

Oh, in the hour of dawn I sought thee,
Enraptured, in my arms have caught thee!

I have dreamed till the fading skies
Left but a whisper in thine eyes;
Dreamed of thy wonder, too sweet to have told me,
Knowing more faithful arms might hold thee,
Singing these selfsame ecstasies,
Dominant with desires,
As chords of our forgotten lyres,
From starlit treasures.

Ah, but I dreamt, in pride, to have known thee,
Till, in thy sacred fear, thou hast flown me.

I once dreamed to have won thy love,
Glorified in my treasure trove.
But winds of a wonder-land shall kiss thee,
Beyond my ken. Though a heart shall miss thee,
Dead in forgotten revery,
God's is a greater token,
Twilight dreams, fore'er unbroken,
In arms of Eternity.

WINTER

Grey, naked limbs of old trees score the clouds,
Across the pallid marsh, against the West.
The waning hours of autumn twilight shrouds
The silent mould, forgotten its unrest.

One moment flares in crimson blazonry,
As would the failing heart-beats flush the stark
Horizon's face with hope. And quietly
The last gleam vanishes before the dark.

Once we were blessed with Life's sweet passion flower.
Would I had died for you, dear, but the fire
Of your eyes fled, within the crowning hour,
E'er you had gained Life's consummate desire.

Although with you the last dear light was cleft,
I never pray that you may come again.
The winter shadows fold me since you left,
Bereft of dreams the heart recalls in pain.

ADIEU!

Farewell to thee!
A mist comes o'er mine eyes.
Somewhere deep-caverned rivers
Are running to a sea
Beneath the earth;
And on the hearth
The cricket chirps and cries.

Farewell to thee!
Again—let our lips meet,
Before the soul is gone.
I hear them calling me—
Fall comes on Spring.
I cannot sing—
Kiss me but once, my sweet!

Now I must go!
Why do they call to me,
Yon host of cherubim?
The heart beats weak and slow.
Souls drift in air—
Art thou still there?
Ah, love—farewell to thee!

TO-MORROW

Not that you know the world as I,
Outward and home again!
I ask no wonder of knowing why
All beauty is of pain.

For I have met on God's highway
Magic of full-blown flowers;
Those that have perfumed night and day,
Or wept with April's showers.

Not that you break upon my dream,
But old faith bids me see,
Beyond the child-wraith that you seem,
The flower that is to be!

SPRING PRELUDE

There's sweetness of new life that runs before the rain,
The softly breathing freshness, hallowed of dreams to be.
Old memories lurk as ghosts, and prayers in the trees, and
 pain,
The sigh of broken hearts, like wind in shells by the sea.

GHOSTS

Old young faces, strange with pain:
Souls that have died, untouched by longing:
Weary feet that pass in the rain:
Around the closed doors thronging!

They who have garnered facts in life;
Measured their joys in gold-dust even;
Might they but know their puppet strife
Transfigured into heaven!

Shadows of the night that fled,
Frightened before the eyes of morning:
Whence, in pity, soft gleam of red
Flushes the cheeks of dawning!

BELIEF

If on the morrow,
When liquored Autumn sets her chalice rare
And the alembic of the gods is cold,
One glint of sunshine creeps aslant your hair,
Then shall I know some things are never old.
Then if it be
God falls Himself in sorrow
Beyond the utter sense of words to tell,
I shall but say, "Ah, well,
'Tis so eternally!"

If as today,
When clouds dream by as prayers across the trees,
Beyond the farthest sands there steals a song
From the high haunt of sacred reveries,
Then shall I know how right dissevers wrong.
Then may I see,
Above all wealth's decay,
The sentient spirit of your eyes' gone flame,
Your beauty one, the same
With immortality!

TE HODIE MEMINISSE!

Far in a kingdom of delight
Beyond the silent sleep of stars,
The silver waves of fortune break
Across the coral-studded bars,

Within whose arms there dreams a pool
Wrapt breathless in its azure sleep.
Forgetful o'er its shadowed face,
The inarticulate hours creep.

One hand it stretched unto the sea
Where all the ships of men went by.
And from the hills a river came
To bear its draught of mystery.

Set in the curve of the golden stream,
As a sapphire in a ring, there lay,
Warmed in the sun of a tinted heaven,
The city glorified, Yea and Nay.

Far away beyond the ken
Of memories today, they said
Children have cast their stones in the water,
To watch the golden rings that spread.

Then, above the song of the stream,
The distant hum of folk in the town,
Busily plying their myriad errands,
Darting beneath the gables that frown

Down on the narrow streets, all paved
With matrix of turquoise, green and blue,
Shimmering, dark, now splendorous in
The glare of a sunset peeping through.

Day unto day they slaved in love,
Blind in their sweet comradery,
Until the god of the darkling pool
Awoke from the coral arms of the sea.

Out of the depths he clasped the soul,
And a dream of dreams from the star of night.
Then, as the swift song of desire,
Entered the City of Delight.

Hark! does the footless wind come down
The sleeping streets of blue and green,
As, tremulous in dim ecstasy,
The shadow incarnate comes unseen!

Even the laughter of the dawn
Is quiet in the chant of birth.
Only the saints of Yea and Nay
Dream of such mystery on earth!

Before the eternal gates of faith
The dark god laid the star of dawn.
And in the quiver of his breath
Behold, a wonder child was born!

He took the clay of saints from earth
And moulded it unto his heart.

So, in the love of what he made,
The master made his counterpart.

He caught the image of his love
Into his arms, and kissed again
The petalled lips of rose he formed,
In fire, to meet the lips of men.

Then to the child of life he sang
As whisper of far distant wind!
He gave unto her soul his last,
The trinity of humankind!

.

“Thine shall be Truth, the wisdom of Beyond,
Beyond the lips of critics to confess.
For Truth is Love and Beauty, far too fond
For other than man’s utter holiness!

“Thy passion shall dissect this carnival
Of easy hate and worship o’er intense,
Till in the requiem of sin shall fall
Thy soul upon us as the world’s incense.

“And men shall love thy beauty as a flower.
Thy lips shall sing of wordless mystery,
The sacred silence of our lone grey hour,
When twilight soundless fades across a sea.

“To break the vain persuasions of weak threat,
Courage is thine, that seeks the farthest quest.

Thy spirit eyes, thy song of songs shall set
A thrall on fools, the pride of tongues at rest.

"Thy mind shall see, through littleness of pain,
Full many a man has met his Calvary.
Laughter of sun or wistfulness of rain
Thy power shall meet in calm humility.

"The Courage of lost dreams is to have tried,
To laugh upon these earthen moulds that rot,
To scorn our strife, though many friends have died,
As night-born heroes in the years forgot.

"Behold, the flame of Faith is given thee,
The thirsting torch of wonder that distils
Through the rich veil of old eternity
To one ecstatic light upon our wills.

"The passing moment is not what it seems.
For Faith is aye the sweet of evening sun,
In myriad raiment on the hill of dreams,
When darkness bids believe all things are done.

"Strange cry of curlews dismal on the moors
Is but the ghost of weaker mortal tears.
These death-born elements against our doors,
Mere instant spume that dies upon the years.

"So down the incessant wane and birth of years,
While men still mimic, and our hands shall mar,
Thy soul shall steal, half nebulous through tears,
Their dominant light, our still unfading Star!"

September 19th.

SONNETS

CLAY

I dreamed You said, O God, this world was Yours.
Why then these shop-worn faces, white and sad?
And in Your name, we preach our mortal cures.
These claim poets atavists, and all saints mad.
What is this mould but cells to form our limbs?
And women bear our fair, immaculate sons
To guide as puppets of their own dear whims,
To mark their growth with false comparisons.
Young thought is commandeered until the soul
Sinks numb in disrespect, to cry "Forbear!"
And every one fades blindly with the whole,
Lays him to rest, unnoted in Your quair.
Trembling in the last gleam, elders lie
Or pay to hide life's hand-wrought parody.

INSPIRATION

If there be Heaven, it must be here and now,
Sea, wind, and rain, and every pain He spent
To ease our poor distress, and to endow
This worthless mould with quickened sacrament.
When we awaken to that power of mind
Which sets us glorious victors of duress;
When fragile beauty in high humankind
Is thirsted for by braggart manliness;
Our Heaven shall be the gleam high faith sustains
As the invincible lights of sun and star,
When storms die down and utter peace remains,
And only pride or prejudice can mar.
White Christ of yesteryear, to whom we pray,
We halt the crucifixion of to-day!

BEAUTY

I

The feet of centuries, like drops of rain,
Throng against the doors of the beyond.
A sea of heroic faces, scarred with pain
Of outworn creed and fragile dream too fond,
Search the remotest darkness with wet eyes,
Half light in embers of yet unquenched faiths.
Some day the song of greater harmonies
Must reach our ears, when we are but the wraiths
Of what we are with mortal sense unused
To the One Beauty. Then, our lips unsealed,
Shall say the unutterable prayer, long years refused;
Then, to our blinded souls shall stand revealed,
When twilight dims, and dreams like fires die,
The lone Madonna of áll Mystery!

Mayhap, great Shepherdess, thou shalt descend
Into the shadow of our fretted vale,
As a new rainbow at the grey day's end
Lightens the sea, colours an old ship's sail.
And man will feel his brain a quickened mould,
Sentient with all the second mind distils
Of beauty incarnate, wonders manifold,
That sorrow and laughter, gladness or pain fulfils.
Then our disbodied voices may recall
This little planet: "It was not so bad,
Yon masterpiece of His, when, all in all,
Men lived in song, and conquest was made glad:
And far by flowered meadows where He sowed,
Saints thronged the little hamlet by the road."

LOVE

I

Master, we seek the strength of thy great hand!
Only may we be powerful to prove
Ourselves, to break the bars of Hell, and stand
Requited on the threshold of clear Love.
Thou art the wine illimited of measure;
Master of our Madonna's frailty;
Joy in Beauty beyond the sense of pleasure;
The nebulous star of poignant ecstasy
In things made sacred by small circumstance.
And things unsanctified breathe purer fire.
Our deeper hearts refuse the petty chance,
And humbly set denial on desire.
Let us be tried until the quickened dream
Fulfil the truth one love alone must seem!

We poor appointed saints of Kingdom Come,
Are we inheritors of this quick power,
Master of Worship, all that issues from
The heart's full fount to crown this passing hour!
I found you sleeping in a child's wide eyes:
You are the wind across the evening light:
You are the dream of unwrought mysteries,
The prayer of dawn unconscious in the night.
I once saw light upon a woman's face,
Like some dim, sacred thought returned fulfilled,
Till, shadow-graven, pain crept in its place,
And even the laughter of the stars was stilled.
As lightning rives the face of heaven, so rain
Is but the tears, still-born of Beauty's pain.

FAITH

Out of the dark, One Beauty manifest!
Ah, sophists still revise our golden rules.
And mock-crusaders teem their petty quest,
As God smiles on the wisdom of his fools.
Unmastered in quick hope, belied we stand
Apostates to the truth of what is ours.
Some sabbath Puritan must stay the hand
That moulds the very wonder of God's flowers.
Out of the dark, some chosen eyes shall face
One Beauty manifest, one perfect Light,
Beyond the human bound of time or space,
That chars the temporal nerve of common sight:
When the invisible scars of hearts are healed,
And the last Grail, unbodied, lies revealed!

JOY

Call of the gay earth's end, where pure dreams run
A-whisper with wild joy of field and fen!
Broken, the old shrine-gates that smoulder, dun
Against the greyling heaven of little men.
This, then, is consciousness of clearing ringed passion,
Freedom of heart and mind, as some glad boy.
Let menials of conscience seek to fashion
Nor scope, nor content of immaculate Joy!
This is the sense which all glad things resolves
Unto a silver cloud, and towers up
Into the dawn, till every self dissolves,
A spirit bubble in the sapphire cup.
It is the wine diffused of morning skies,
The light of dreams in dim, grief-shadowed eyes.

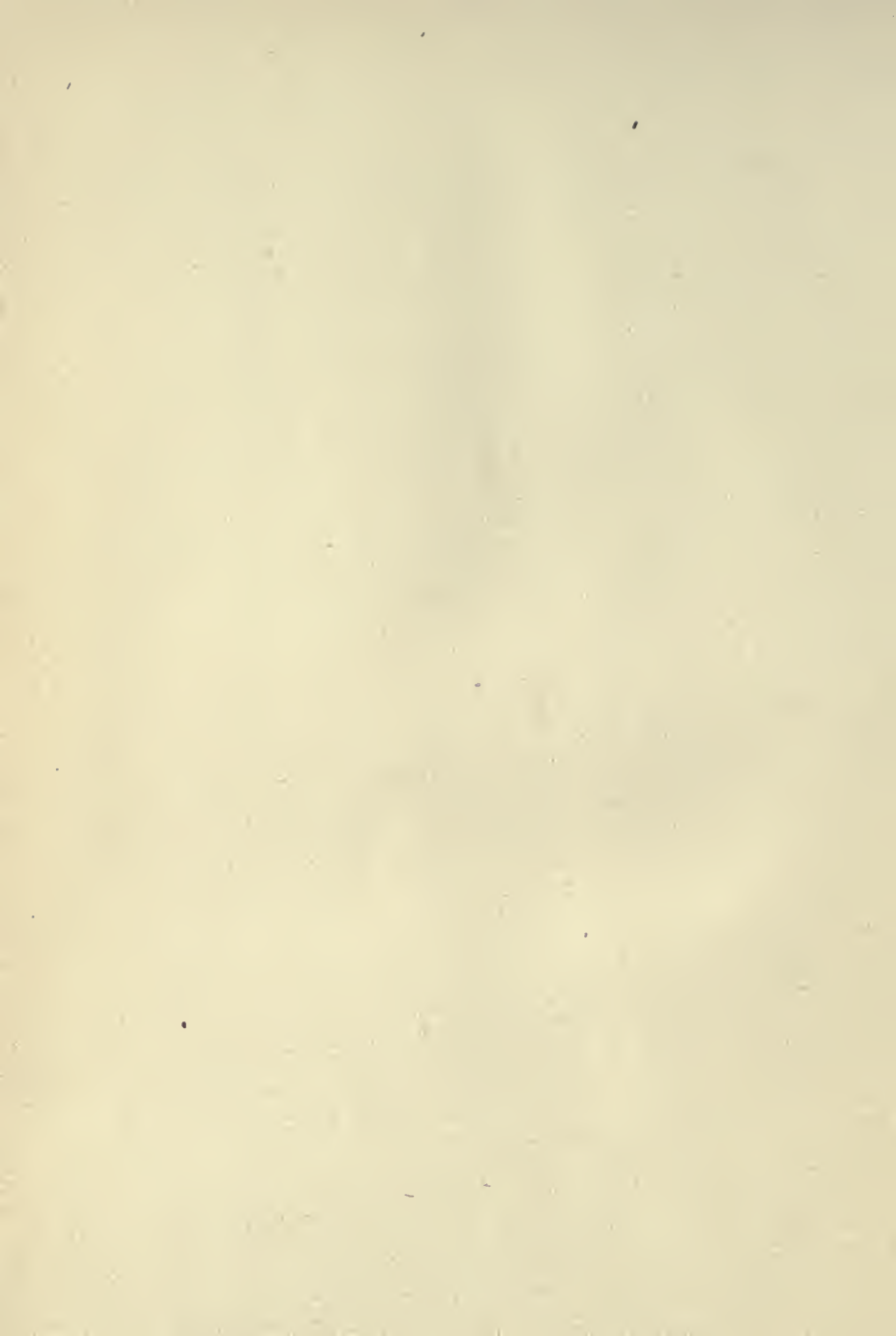
TEARS

Master, I knew Thee, and Madonna, too,
Yet sweet intoxication breeds a ghost
Of constant Love and Beauty, reasoned true!
Strange earthly queries gather in a host
About this grave gowned Sorrow, and tears start
To mar our Beauty's face. It is the sway,
The moving soul up through the lichened heart,
As a blind seed strives slowly up toward day.
Always the pain where best endeavours fail
To still time's haunting transitoriness!
Ever black shadows fall across the Grail.
We, children, weep till waste and weariness
Quiet our limbs; then fresh hope bids us see
Calm Olivet beyond our Calvary!

REVELATION

Ah, little world, wheel on beyond my ken!
Here sensual art moulds but idolatry,
And opiate saints breed lunacy in men,
Where blissful ignorance kneels to prophecy.
We men and works are but the dust of stars,
Voiceless in body, articulate in soul.
No more I thirst, where contradiction mars,
I that am god, the fraction and the whole!
Our veriest tongues shed only broken light
Over eternal depths wherein we slave,
Till the unspoken shaft gleams down the night,
Makes naught of grief, and mockery of the grave.
Poor sin and shame crumble in wisdom's scorn.
We ride to fall—yet mount again, reborn!

BY THE SEA



THE LAST CHANTEY

Breath o' the sea and laughter would renew
The eager music of the heart's lost tune,
All the world-wonder that found form in you ;
 As every star distils in phosphorus
 Along the ribboned highway of the moon.

Sorrow revives the dim enchantment rare
Like an old song, the trade-wind's littyany.
The grey hut on the wild hill still is there,
 A crumbling acrolith of prayers foregone.
 The tide-rip sets to slumber in the sea.

The beauty of all being lingers near ;
With the old land's wrapt mystery it is one ;
Seeming belies the fact you are not here.
 You are a part of wind, and rain, and sky,
 The shadow of wings against the flare of sun !

One cannot hope that you should understand
The memory of all awakened here.
I search the purple depth of shadow-land
 For some fulfilment of our dream forgot,
 And every bitter-sweet of yesteryear.

Yet you are with me. And we watch the dawn
Beyond the petty kingdoms of desire.
Above the druid rocks, the mist-winds mourn
 As ghost of living dream whose soul is spent.
The desolate cliffs are but a corpse outleant,
 The tomb of miracles, a wind-swept choir !

L'IMPORTUNE

Down on the wings of morning
That scatter the frightened stars,
Out of the Vast you drifted
To break the linked bars

That bound the temple of darkness,
Entering from the light
To spread your radiant glory
Over the floors of night.

Onto the dying embers
Of Youth, calm and alone,
The lambent gold of the dawning
Fell where your deep eyes shone.

Unflinching didst thou enter,
Softly knelt at the shrine,
Laying your gift before it
To know all that was mine.

All in your reverent beauty,
Your hand touched soft the rood.
With faith your sweet words drew
The pain from solitude.

Deep in the valley of shadow
We met in the light of love,
You with a dream of the morrow
Sweet from the hills above.

You woke from a sleep of living,
Singing your rhythmic part,
To garner the wealth of morning
Into a thirsting heart.

The winds swept cool on the hill-crest;
We parted above the sea,
Where tidings of new kingdoms
Whispered from Arcady.

But you have left me a song
In the face of the world to cry,
Songs that a God had taught you,
For years to magnify.

A PORTRAIT

High in a darkened niche of dust and gloom
Rests a fair portrait, silent, without name,
Within its gilded walls. The curtained room
Forbids the ray of over-daring light
That seeks to touch, receding at the sight,
The gloried precincts of the olden frame.

And youth speaks there, deep-flowing,
The thrill of song and dance,
Yet sympathy and pathos,
The sacred, still romance
Of by-gone days in pleasure
Of meeting the world anew,
To touch the hearts of burden
With song the whole world through.

Was such an image done by human hand
To conjure life in the illumined face?
Those spirit eyes that search and understand
Our sternest depths, as youth and ecstasy
Blend in the rapture of infinity;
O, power of youth that heaven alone may trace!

The room is worn and sleeping
For aye, so dark and cold.
Far away lips are speaking
Softly and strange—ah, hold
The taper. We linger in darkness,
A shade-wrapt figure above.
'Tis life, albeit those eyes
Are blind to the world they move.

Th' empurpled robe, in deepening shadow spent,
Is lightened as the slender, white hands rest,
Clasped in the azure of the Orient.
She, sweet creation of the fairy dance,
Sings on alone, all in the gloried trance
A touch of wild divinity expressed.

Soft comes the power of silence
In dreams of a treasure trove,
The breath of new-born kingdoms.
Oh, eyes of the blind that move
The pulse of a teeming million
To slave in their God's great plot
Of love—as the darkling heroes
Who died in the worlds forgot!

SONG

I saw a wisp of fairy cloud
Sailing in the morning sky,
When skylarks cry their song aloud
To wake the dawn from revery.

The winds of morning, ever sweet
With freedom, and the elfin's bell
Were joyful notes. While, at my feet,
Wild children came with dreams to sell.

I dreamed that thou wert hiding there,
A smile upon thy lips anew,
Laughing beyond the cloud-wisp, where
Thy happiness was lost to view.

And yet the very cloud was thee,
Drifting across the azure years,
Over the purling of the sea,
To fill God's chalices with tears.

THE HEART OF A MANSION

I watched from the barren rocks that frown,
As sentinels of the night, far down
To a twilight sea, so softly breathing, breathing deep, aye,
fathoms deep.

I saw the circling sea-gull's wing
Black in the mist. The waters sing
Still of the ancient viking, crooning, spinning the web of a
wind-blown sleep.

Over the star-dust of the sea
That chants to the winds eternally,
Far on a distant headland bleak, a mansion of Italia lay;
Indefinable in its glory,
Memored with each wondrous story
From the peoples of the North, to Ind, where broken fakirs
pray.

Bronze from the pagan altars taken,
Leaves from illumined volumes shaken
On to the path of ages, and gathered, blind as the dreaming
builder went;
Out of the grey monastic store,
Fragments of forgotten lore
Told of the hours in search and wander over the land of
dead creeds spent.

Embers of old fires dying,
Yet in their midst a heart is crying
Out against the brazen symbols, dead as the Hindu's image-
sod.

Sudden, a light peers through the gloom,
Trembling, soft, from room to room.
I see a wonder-woman passing, beauty formed in the hand
of God.

Pure as the dim cathedral haze,
White vision of our latter days,
Over the faithless bits of mimic, warmth of a living soul
she spreads.
Her clouded hair, like thunder skies,
Shadows the clear, unfathomed eyes.
Sweet and still, she sings the tale of a thousand hearts of
the world she reads.

Her eyes watch wondrous as a child,
In emerald light, as gipsy-wild
She walks in loneliness, her cheeks by petal of the wild-rose
flushed.
All winds cease their minstrelsy
To wonder at her melody,
As when a Trojan maiden passed the siren tongues of old
were hushed.

Then, in the glamour of a dream,
Treasured walls and niches seem
Broken in the hand of time, back to the dust of ages turn-
ing.
Winds of heaven, that Titans hurl
Where caverned waters foam and curl,
Touch not the flame above the ruin, holy shaft on the altar
burning.

* * *

Out of the night a pebble fell
Down from the cliff to break the spell.
Still upon the beaten shore a mansion of dead riches lay,
All bereft by a northern sea
That croons in a woman's melody,
Breathing soft to a trade-wind's murmur, a million million
years away.

ECHOES

Grey dawn and the rain, alone!
And alone she came in the rain.
It is only the wide sea's overtone
Echoes her voice again!

New dawn and the light of her eyes,
The sweet, faint trace of pain!
Her lips were stilled in the mysteries;
The dim sea slept in rain.

Dusk, where the house yet stands
Above the old sea's refrain!
Sea-wrack where steps came over the sands,
As none may come again!

MISERERE

Shadows flit in the woodland,
Deep where the pinelands croon
Their vespers to the night winds,
Still to the errant moon.

Wild sunsets sweep the valley,
Tinging the crimson leaves,
Till night creeps soft on the meadows,
Veiling the banded sheaves.

Ah, dear as the dawn was our coming.
Sweet were thy words at noon,
Bringing new deeds of glory,
Spent in thy world. Too soon

The rainbow sank from our vision,
And the dusk crept over thee.
Together, in faith, we followed
A moon-path over the sea.

The hope of a darkling morrow
Sweeps as a flitting ray
Upon us. The bitter present
Sings of our yesterday.

Ah, bitterness of the passing
Is power to dream anew,
Faith in the marching millions,
Till Eden's tale fall true.

The centuries melt to moments
In the chant of the deodars.
What hope, but a jewelled bubble
Wind-driven to the stars!

Stand not for the unforgiving
Swift years. Dear soul, drink deep
Of love, as the weaving mid-seas
Lull to an infinite sleep.

Life is but built in the dreaming,
Is come, too sweet, and past
To dusk. In the dear communion
Each chalice is the last.

THE MOON-CALF

It may have been a bit of paradise
That flitted on your childish face forlorn.
Poor, sorry lad, I watch those foolish eyes
To catch them waking from the sleep of dawn.

What dreams have drawn you to the evening shore?
Ah, wonder-lad, could we but have your faith
To reach the gardens of forgotten lore,
To build our creeds from some moon-woven wraith!

You walk the weed-bound rocks with surer feet
Than ours, who follow in the paths of power.
Mayhap you are the stronger who can meet
The faith of friendship in the magic hour.

Although, in faith, you gain a mummer's wreath;
The old world laughs—on to infinity,
Your soul drifts, smiling on the road beneath
The stars that tinkle on a drowsy sea.

Once we stood by the border, little lad,
Of spirit wonder in the winds of night.
And our life's undertone seemed halfway sad,
You stood so bravely on the bar of light.

Our lips blaspheme your foolish song divine,
Lone player in dreams, albeit, when you trod,
With shadow eyes, upon the amber line
Of ocean light—mayhap you sang of God!

TWILIGHT

Thou art gone,
And I alone.
Love is sinking in the mist
That crowns the headland in the sunset,
Veiling dim the crimson sunset,
When winds whisper as they list.
Thou art gone,
And I—alone!

Love is done,
And I alone.
Still thy song comes bitter-sweet
With the tinted fires of sunset,
Through the sorrow-veil at sunset,
Where the lights and shadows meet.
Love is done,
And I—alone!

Love was done
When thou wert gone,
When a Voice called in the twilight.
Yet, I watch dark birds at sunset,
Broken acroliths of sunset,
For thy God called in the twilight,
“Love is done.”
So thou art gone!

DAY'S END

The world seems afar off now.
It's cool and clean on this ledge.
Dead leaves lisp on the bough,
The fingering wind through the hedge.

The sea, with its ebb and flow,
Sings drowsily unto me, curled
In the grass. Sails pass and go
Over the edge of the world.

Twilight creeps wearily, tires
The heart of its craving the dawn,
In watching the studded fires,
When the curtain of saints is drawn.

What say you? I may be mad?
But the soul of God is the sea!
And, however the song be sad,
It's tuned to the heart of me!

There's star dust in my eyes.
See, your lips thirst for her smile,
And—it's getting cold 'neath the skies!
I guess I was sleeping the while!

THE END

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